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ABSTRACT

Australian school administration, according to the author of this bibliography, is currently moving away from a traditional, centralized structure and toward structures calling for the participation of subordinates or outsiders. The journal articles and books catalogued in this document treat several of the ramifications of these changes in Australian educational governance. The publications included are listed under the following topic headings: centralization and devolution (19 items), participation and decisions (20), school-community relations (36), school councils (13), special projects in the community (23), accountability (18), evaluation and school evaluation (18), the principal's role (39), resource management (12), decision-making (26), education and social change (25), criticisms and proposals (21), influence and influentials (24), government and education (30), equality of opportunity (20), and schools and work (15). A substantial majority of the documents are articles published in Australian educational journals. (PGD)

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JOURNAL OF
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THE AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION:

POWER, PARTICIPATION AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

W. S. SIMPKINS
Centre for Administrative Studies
University of New England

1981

General Editor of Series
A. ROSS THOMAS

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1
INTRODUCTION

Administrative change in Australian schools is taking a particular direction with many centralised agencies of government changing their participative arrangements to produce modifications of long established structures of administrative centralism. The new approaches to participation involve sometimes subordinates and sometimes outsiders, with participative adaptations taking somewhat different directions across Australian States.

In the past, centralism of public administration commended itself as the administrative strategy best designed to match shared social purposes with common social policies and then to ensure their uniform application. Ministerial links between government and top public service executives, provided the connection thought necessary to translate social policies into common services, through a centralised system of control and coordination. Centralised administrative links with government provided school systems with various kinds of support. Particularly important was support in the form of government confirmations of administrative authority. Through ministerial linkages flowed power and justifications, a formidable combination which shaped the power relativities established between central office and outside interests—power balances which buttressed the authority of central office officials.

The acceptance of centralism helped legitimate the authority of those standing within the structures of centralism. It encouraged recognition of official authority jurisdictions and deference to the unequal balance of powers holding between superiors and subordinates, an unequal balance which, it was argued, was required by the structures of centralism.

Administrative changes presently under way are adaptive in intent, initiated to help school systems sustain their service role and status position in a changing society. Thus, administrative changes can be viewed as responses to the need for administrative systems to sustain their modes of operation under the varied pressures of current social and economic circumstances. In times of change, systems must adapt if they are to function well, or to appear to function well. They must be prepared to make changes or be seen to make changes if only to preserve their essential character. The various participative structures presently emerging across school systems represent different approaches to developing greater external (public) and internal (subordinate) involvement in deciding policies and programmes.

Moves to widen the base of public participation symbolise the willingness of school administrators to act in the light of the question-

ing of authority, trends towards social diversity, and public anxieties aroused by a contracting economy. A proliferation of commissions, boards, councils, and more informal consultative groups publicise a readiness to establish a wider base of representative participation in the running of schools. Different approaches to participation as achieved through devolution are being taken in the various state systems in such decision areas as: policy, finance and administration, staffing and staff development, assessment and supervision, school organization, curriculum, support and advisory services, school buildings. State administrators are developing their own answers to the questions: (1) who should participate and how? and (2) who should appear to participate?

2
PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

Are the various publics inside and outside schools being given a greater say in school decisions? There is evidence of greater involvement by subordinates at various levels within systems and greater participation by outside groups through new channels of consultation and representation. Both forms of devolution, internal participation and external representation, raise contentious issues. In many devolution schemes, a balance must be struck between the relative powers of various participants as they are enhanced through opportunities for involvement. How do any such arrangements affect the relative capacities of staff as against outside representatives to influence decisions?

The question of internal delegation raises two different but related sets of questions. First, to what extent should there be delegation of decision authority within the top administrative cadre which coordinates the overall operations of the system at basic administrative levels, i.e. what should be the relative powers of central, regional and local administrative officials, including school principals? Second, what should be the relative powers of system and local administrators as against teachers as professional subordinates, and the relative powers of local administrators and teachers *vis-à-vis* students and parents?

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3
PARTICIPATION AND THE COMMUNITY

There are a number of constituencies (parents, students and teachers) making demands on school administrators. Must administrators necessarily comply with these? At what point can schools make a stand when they feel local advice and directives are unacceptable professionally? Community advocacy groups are becoming more vocal over school matters as citizens feel they have a right to be involved more directly in setting priorities and evaluating programmes. Are schools and community representatives prepared to sustain the level of parent-teacher collaboration and cooperation required to make effective school decisions? The responses of school principals and teaching staff to the notion of lay participation in school-based decisions may be ambivalent, incorporating defensive and welcoming attitudes.

DEFENSIVE	*WELCOMING*
1. Feeling that defences against the inroads of community influence are being dismantled, with schools left as lonely outposts isolated from central office	1. Feeling that schools can draw on community power and material resources to get things done.
2. Suspicion that cooperation with outsiders over internal school matters may allow outsiders to seize control of the school; that outsiders are ignorant and not well disposed, thus reducing the quality of decisions previously maintained through professional control	2. Confidence that schools have the power resources and political skills necessary to handle the negotiative, bargaining and diplomatic aspects of community cooperation.
3. Concern that schools may be blamed directly for mistakes and errors of judgement which previously passed unnoticed, or which could previously be blamed on central office.	3. A strong belief that school staffs have professional skills as individuals and professional power as a group.

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4
PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Schools are evaluated by inspecting teachers, schools and student performance. In traditional State school systems a complex machinery of evaluation operated which required an inspectorial cadre and an external examination system to check performance against achievement criteria centrally defined and uniformly applied.

Now, these questions are being debated. Should internal evaluation be centrally dictated or delegated to schools? Should internal evaluation proceed in the light of central or locally determined measures of performance? Should internal evaluation be replaced by open evaluation, with outsiders playing a part in developing and assessing evaluation procedures whether imposed at central or local levels?

School-based evaluation is a term which is full of ambiguities. Does it mean that reports will still be written on teachers, that the school as a whole will still be inspected, and that students will still be examined? What part will the following groups play, if any, in defining objectives, setting standards, deciding on procedures, evaluating results, and determining corrective action: students, teaching staff, the school principal, school councils, system officials at local, regional and central offices?

With school-based decision-making the school becomes the focus of accountability demands from various sources, e.g. from the school system and the local community. What evaluation procedures and demonstrations of sensitivity to accountability expectations best satisfy local accountability demands? Who holds formal and immediate responsibility at the local level for performance testing? Will it take place indirectly (through scrutiny of reports and findings made by others) or directly through observing schools in action? Finally, who will be accountable to whom, how, and with reference to what? Will changes in accountability procedures produce shifts in the locus of authority and influence?

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5
PARTICIPATION AND EVALUATION

Devolution of power redefines and intensifies accountability issues as they relate to policy and practice. Accountability under centralism is based on central assessments of performance as dictated by standards and procedures centrally defined. With a movement towards decentralisation and outside involvement, questions arise over the way various decision participants must answer for their decisions. To whom should they be accountable, for what, and by what means?

FIGURE 1
PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL EVALUATION

CENTRAL CONTROL

State wide, centrally dictated assessments for internal consumption: controlled reporting.	Outside participation in state wide, centrally dictated assessments for both internal consumption and outside appraisal.
CLOSED REPORTING	*OPEN REPORTING*
School-based assessment locally devised for internal consumption controlled reporting.	Outside participation in school-based assessments for internal consumption and outside appraisal.

LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

Accountability requires observation, asking questions, requiring explanations and justifications, evaluating performance in terms of the way results do or do not reflect objectives translated into achievement through efficient, effective practices, and ensuring that review judgements lead to corrective action through power (sanctions) or influence (advice).

Who can be placed in the category of the accountable? Defining the accountable can be difficult when complex decisions involve many people in their making. Making decisions and taking action means specifying goals, defining policies, planning and allocating resources, evaluating and predicting, implementing and executing programmes,

making corrections, and developing specific lines of action. How are those differentially involved at these various stages held responsible? While official accountability may be clear, in many cases moral accountability is not.

To whom are school staff accountable, immediately and ultimately? What accountability consequences do they bear, be they in the form of rewards, punishments, advice, or blame? Being responsible to a school principal who cannot dismiss staff may differ from being answerable to a school principal with rights to hire and fire. Being responsible to a school council which has little official say in school matters may differ from being accountable to a school council whose members can decide how money is spent on school programmes.

Some Typical Comments:

1. With greater school responsibility for curriculum there is greater pressure on schools to explain and justify what they do.
2. With school based decisions, parents may see the point in asking questions of schools and teachers because the school and classroom are now places where some real decisions are made, with the locus of such decisions publically admitted.
3. Greater freedom to make decisions brings with it a greater responsibility to stand up and answer for consequences.
4. It is difficult to establish clear lines of accountability when local schools are held accountable to various publics located at local, regional and national levels.

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6
PARTICIPATION AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

There is considerable concern with the problems facing local school administrators during a time of administrative devolution. How do moves from traditional systems of control and coordination and established modes of cooperation and involvement affect the work of practising administrators? How do new participative arrangements reshape their tasks, formal powers, and official standing, and the way they must relate to others to maintain cohesion in the face of the diverse viewpoints stimulated by broadening participative involvement? Is devolution changing the roles of individual administrators at various administrative levels? How do changes in authority roles in one position affect authority and responsibility roles in others? Does devolution demand new leadership approaches to participative management in decision-making?

Moves towards devolution through internal delegation and outside participation have an impact on the internal and outside constraints and opportunities which define the discretionary powers of administrators in decision-making. Do current changes enhance the capacity of policy-makers and executives to take initiatives or are they increasingly subject to the influence of emerging power elites while still part or complete captives of old establishments? Are school staff swapping one set of masters for another, while being given the authority necessary to establish their bona fides as accountability respondents? Are any additional discretionary decision rights given to staff more apparent than real, with schools still constrained by government, the politics of resource allocation, and detailed work routines which allow staff to do little more than adapt standardised instructional options?

Will moves towards devolution confirm the ultimate powers of central authority while relieving central officials of direct responsibility? Many writers insist that present moves towards devolution represent a genuine re-allocation of powers and duties at various administrative levels, with central office retaining its importance but changing its administrative tasks.

If schools are to have a proper say in decisions they must also have a say in the way resources are deployed and money spent. Traditionally, decisions on resource allocation were centralised to guarantee the uniformity of school programmes which, it was believed, would promote equality of opportunity. In highly centralised school systems, school funding is primarily in the hands of treasurers,

auditors, and finance officers. Devolution of power assumes that a broad band system of participation in decision-making will allow participants from various administrative levels to develop the diversity of school programmes which matches school services with special local requirements.

With devolution of power, how will various people participate in funding decisions and take appropriate responsibility for them, within the context of clear lines of financial accountability? Questions of accountability raise questions concerning expertise in resource allocation and the mastery of proper expenditure procedures. Most approaches to devolving responsibility for funding decisions accept a balance of constraints: e.g. that most money spent on staff and building will continue to be in the hands of central authorities, and that those handling other localised funding decisions must have some training in resource management and accounting.

Those who press for devolution in this area rest their case on such arguments as the following:

1. When responsible and accountable for funding decisions, schools staff will have the incentive to use resources efficiently (will relate benefits to costs), and effectively (resource allocation will promote school objectives).
2. The school budget will reflect a local consensus on local school priorities.
3. School staff will face the reality that decisions on funding must acknowledge the twin restraints of feasibility and cohesiveness.
4. School staff will develop a mature approach to local resource allocation, realising that there is a cost to every decision (that certain priorities are usually set at the expense of others), and that heavy accountability burdens must be carried if local funding is to stimulate innovation.

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7
PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL AND POLITICAL POWER

With schools presently constrained by decreasing resources in the form of shrinking financial support and falling enrolments, is public confidence in schools waning? Is there a growing scepticism of the way schools can help in difficult times? A review of the literature on schools and society suggests that a search for educational solutions in times of economic stringency and financial cutbacks is usually accompanied by a loss of public confidence in formal education, with the financial squeeze and public disenchantment reinforcing demands for accountability and control to the point where educational institutions operate in a climate of watchful surveillance.

Also, with services strained through economic stringency, and a shrinking proportion of taxpayers willing to sustain high levels of educational funding, there are strong differences of opinion among those who wish to have a say in educational funding. In times of need, schools are subject to various demands. Some, of course, represent the traditional demands of orthodox reformers, cast in the form of utopian ideologies. Middle class utopianism currently finds expression in aesthetic sensitivity, stimulating a greater public awareness of the "finer aspects of living", whether these be defined in cultural or environmental terms. However, present opportunities for aesthetic indulgence may be seen as a disposable luxury, a priority which must take second place to needs for financial and economic survival at personal and national levels.

In the current temper of the times a new twist is often given to continuing expectations. Present demands for closer school-community relationships must now be assessed in the light of demands for the kinds of accountability checks which guarantee economies through efficiency. When the question is asked, how well is the public served by schools, the public interest is defined in terms of enhancing individual work prospects and the national economy. In the light of this definition, public systems of universal schooling are coming under criticism for not providing the work-force with the technical skills necessary to promote job opportunities and economic growth.

Many believe that the intensity of pressures converging on schools will increase, with a growing conflict of narrowly defined school objectives as controversies develop over social policies and the special role of schools in promoting them. Contradictory pressures and de-

mands have always created dilemmas for those faced with ordering school priorities. However, the crises of hard times intensify the problems of policy-makers and the problem of maintaining credibility and support for policies increases.

Contradictory pressures arising from divisions in outlook among the public further intensify decision dilemmas for those responsible for mass education. The demand to educate anyone who wants it may not be compatible with the insistence that quality education should cater for the needs of individuals and special groups. The demand that schools must educate anyone who wants it does not always sit easily with the claim for quality education. State systems of mass education can never please everyone and the tensions provoked mean that administrators operate under the stresses of compromise. How can decisive decisions be made when a continuing obsession with mass achievement as measured quantitatively cannot be easily reconciled with the value placed on individual achievement defined in qualitative terms as self-realisation? Thus, mass school systems are always open to criticism on the grounds that their instructional programmes represents a set of unholy compromises, producing a low common denominator of service which disappoints everyone. Many of the questions posed are perennial and relate to the endemic defects of mass schooling, with some believing that they can only be corrected through major surgery, or a convulsive therapy which takes systems of mass schooling to the point of destruction in order to achieve a cure. Others believe it would be better for students to be educated by participating in productive and cultural activities outside the school, with the role of mass schooling in education being considerably reduced.

Tension also arises from the opposing demands of cultural identity and cultural diversity. Cultural pluralist and assimilationist ideologies define extreme positions taken in planning the ethnic context of instruction. Pluralists believe that ethnic identities are important and that learning material should be culture specific, with the major goal of schools being to help the child live in an ethnic culture. The assimilationist sees ethnicity as temporary, with schools socialising children to accept the established ideals of traditional Australian society. In the latter view there is a common set of skills which all Australian citizens should master: the primary aim of schools is to socialise individuals into a common culture, with the school being neutral on the ethnic attachments of its students.

Thus, the pluralist believes that ethnic identities are important, that learning material should be culture specific, and that the major purpose of curriculum is to help the child function in an ethnic culture. His approach to curriculum planning is to negotiate ethnic content as central to the curriculum. The assimilationist sees ethnicity as fleeting and temporary and insists that schools should socialise a prime

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INFLUENCE AND INFLUENTIALS

Government, schools and society are highly interdependent. Although at times schools appear to be unassailable, closed systems of power, at other times they are clearly vulnerable to outside pressures. This ambiguous power situation poses problems for school administrators when they must work with others to arrive at decisions which require cooperation if sound decisions are to be made and put into effect. The problem is more acute when the people administrators work with represent diverse interests with varying outlooks.

With the rise of politicisation in society and the increasing use of pressure group tactics, school administrators are finding that they must work hard for cooperation in the face of competitive and confrontational stances to decision-making. Increasingly, administrators must understand how corporate decisions can be achieved in the face of the opposing demands of actively competitive groups motivated by personal interests. Administrators must understand the role of influence and influentials in decisions so that they themselves can intervene decisively as responsible decision-makers. They must be interested in such questions as the following:

1. Where are important political, administrative, professional, and community sources of influence in education? Are such sources of influence stable, or do they change with time, circumstance, and the decision area in question?
2. How do active influentials typically bring pressure to bear on school matters?
3. When influence becomes competitive, what forms can conflict take? How can debate escalate into contention over divisive issues?

4. What steps can administrators take, if any, to avoid the corrosive effects of conflict? How can they intervene to manage conflict?

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SCHOOLS AND WORK

Present writings suggest that educational administrators must deal with demands for educational services which prepare students for life in an uncertain, contracting economy marked by retrenchments and the rapid development of a low cost technology more than competitive with labour. Some argue that formal education can do little more than prepare students for an unreal world of full employment, unless there is a major turnabout in the way schools presently operate. They assert that, if this is not attempted, many of the rising generation will be sacrificed to maintain inept school systems, being schooled for a world existing only in the memories of their teachers.

The relationship between schools, the individual and the world of work is presently being discussed in the context of a number of social and economic issues. Notably, there are expressions of concern with the erosion of the work ethic, the contracting market for work skills, and a declining job market that may make formal training and academic education less attractive. These are typical of some of the proposals designed to help the situation.

a. Schools should introduce students to the work place as part of their schooling.
b. Schools should encourage a shift in values, inculcating a commitment to life styles relevant to limited, intermittent involvement in the work-place; with old values establishing commitment to a full-time career being substantially modified.
c. More people should share in the shrinking pool of work opportunities through part-time work programmes, job sharing, early retirement schemes and job creation.
d. Schools should be reorganized to provide alternatives to the traditional system based on a long, preparatory period of schooling filling in the time between early childhood and adult work; with bureaucratic systems inculcating deference to ideas and enforced routines as a preparation suitable for secure careers in authoritarian work places, whether they be public utilities or private firms. One alternative is recurrent education, an approach designed to meet the needs of people who require retraining if they are to re-enter the work place

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